Amendments to the Claims

Claims 1-6. (canceled)

Claim 7. (previously presented): A step-in ski binding according to claim 10 wherein the shaped projecting ends of the retention bolts have one of a chamfer, a rounding and an incline formed above their axes.

Claim 8-9. (canceled)

Claim 10. (previously presented): A step-in ski binding for cross-country skis and touring skis having a longitudinal axis comprising:

(a) a base plate having a long axis for mounting on a ski coincident with the longitudinal axis thereof;

(b) a housing that projects vertically upward from said base plate;

(c) said housing being narrower transversely than said base plate thereby defining lateral spaces extending from the edges of the base plate to the housing;

(d) two pressure-spring-loaded retention bolts, each having a central axis, mounted in the housing and, in repose, extending substantially transversely to the long axis of the step-in binding and having shaped ends projecting out of said housing on opposite sides thereof toward the edges of said base plate;

(e) the shaped projecting ends of said pressure spring-loaded retention bolts adapted to engage in openings formed in legs of an open bottom, inverted U-shaped portion of a ski boot to thereby lock the retention bolts in the ski boot openings; and

(f) a releasing mechanism including a slide mounted on said base plate for relative movement thereto coacting with the retention bolts to force them into the housing removed from the openings of the ski boot so that the ski boot can be lifted vertically upwardly off the housing and freed from the ski binding,

wherein coupling members couple the retention bolts with the slide such that actuation of the

slide moves the slide relative to the base plate forcing the retention bolts into the housing via the coupling members to release a ski boot from the ski binding,
wherein the coupling members are pins that engage with the slide, and
wherein the slide defines guides in which the pins are received and guided.

Claim 11. (currently amended): A step-in ski binding for cross-country skis and touring skis having a longitudinal axis comprising:
(a) a base plate having a long axis for mounting on a ski coincident with the longitudinal axis thereof;
(b) a housing that projects vertically upward from said base plate;
(c) said housing being narrower transversely than said base plate thereby defining lateral spaces extending from the edges of the base plate to the housing;
(d) two pressure-spring-loaded retention bolts, each having a central axis, mounted in the housing and, in repose, extending substantially transversely to the long axis of the step-in binding and having shaped ends projecting out of said housing on opposite sides thereof toward the edges of said base plate;
(e) the shaped projecting ends of said pressure spring-loaded retention bolts adapted to engage in openings formed in legs of an open bottom, inverted U-shaped portion of a ski boot to thereby lock the retention bolts in the ski boot openings; and
(f) a releasing mechanism including a slide mounted on said base plate for relative movement thereto coacting with the retention bolts to force them into the housing removed from the openings of the ski boot so that the ski boot can be lifted vertically upwardly off the housing and freed from the ski binding,
wherein coupling members couple the retention bolts with the slide such that actuation of the slide moves the slide relative to the base plate forcing the retention bolts into the housing via the coupling members to release a ski boot from the ski binding,
~~A ski binding according to claim 10,~~ wherein the coupling members are shaped parts that engage correspondingly shaped guides in the slide.

Claim 12. (previously presented): A ski binding according to claim 10, wherein a member defining an inclined surface is mounted on the base plate; and an obliquely upwardly projecting lever, having a hollow for inserting a ski pole therein for actuation, is mounted to the slide, via a hinge; said lever coacting with said member defining an inclined surface for moving the slide relative to the base plate.

Claim 13. (currently amended): A ski binding according to claim 11 [[10]], wherein the ski binding has a seal formed by a peripheral rib defined by the base plate received in a corresponding groove defined by the housing.

Claim 14-15. (canceled)

Claim 16. (previously presented): A combination according to claim 19 wherein the shaped projecting ends of the retention bolts have one of a chamfer, a rounding and an incline formed above their axes.

Claim 17-18. (canceled)

Claim 19. (previously presented): A combination comprising:

(a) a ski having a longitudinal axis; and

(b) a step-in ski binding including

(i) a base plate having a long axis mounted on the ski coincident with the longitudinal axis thereof;

(ii) a housing that projects vertically upward from said base plate;

(iii) said housing being narrower transversely than said base plate thereby defining lateral spaces extending from the edges of the base plate to the housing;

(iv) two pressure spring-loaded retention bolts, each having a central axis, mounted in the housing and, in repose, extending substantially transversely to the long axis of the step-in binding and having shaped ends projecting out of said housing on opposite sides thereof toward the edges of said base plate;

(v) the shaped projecting ends of said pressure spring-loaded retention bolts adapted to engage in openings formed in legs of an open bottom, inverted U-shaped portion of a ski boot to thereby lock the retention bolts in the ski boot openings; and

(vi) a releasing mechanism including a slide mounted for relative movement with respect to the base plate coacting with the retention bolts to force them into the housing removed from the openings of the ski boot so that the ski boot can be lifted vertically upwardly off the housing and freed from the ski binding,

wherein coupling members couple the retention bolts with the slide such that actuation of the slide moves the slide relative to the base plate forcing the retention bolts into the housing via the coupling members to release a ski boot from the ski binding,

wherein the coupling members are pins that engage with the slide, and

wherein the slide defines guides in which the pins are received and guided.

Claim 20. (currently amended): A combination comprising:

(a) a ski having a longitudinal axis; and

(b) a step-in ski binding including

(i) a base plate having a long axis mounted on the ski coincident with the longitudinal axis thereof;

(ii) a housing that projects vertically upward from said base plate;

(iii) said housing being narrower transversely than said base plate thereby defining lateral spaces extending from the edges of the base plate to the housing;

(iv) two pressure spring-loaded retention bolts, each having a central axis, mounted in the housing and, in repose, extending substantially transversely to the long axis of the step-in binding and having shaped ends projecting out of said housing on opposite sides thereof toward the edges of said base plate;

(v) the shaped projecting ends of said pressure spring-loaded retention bolts adapted to engage in openings formed in legs of an open bottom, inverted U-shaped portion of a ski boot to thereby lock the retention bolts in the ski boot openings; and

(vi) a releasing mechanism including a slide mounted for relative movement with respect to the base plate coacting with the retention bolts to force them into the housing removed from the openings of the ski boot so that the ski boot can be lifted vertically upwardly off the housing and freed from the ski binding,

wherein coupling members couple the retention bolts with the slide such that actuation of the slide moves the slide relative to the base plate forcing the retention bolts into the housing via the coupling members to release a ski boot from the ski binding,

~~A combination according to claim 19,~~ wherein the coupling members are shaped parts that engage correspondingly shaped guides in the slide.

Claim 21. (previously presented): A combination according to claim 19, wherein a member defining an inclined surface is mounted on the base plate; and an obliquely upwardly projecting lever, having a hollow for inserting a ski pole therein for actuation, is mounted to the slide, via a hinge; said lever coacting with said member defining an inclined surface for moving the slide relative to the base plate.

Claim 22. (currently amended): A combination according to claim 20 [[19]], wherein the ski binding has a seal formed by a peripheral rib defined by the base plate received in a corresponding groove defined by the housing.

Claim 23-26. (canceled)